St. Sebastian's C of E Primary School

Intimate Care Policy

Reviewed by:	**EHT**	**Date:**	**January 2024**
Last reviewed on:	**January 2024**		
Next review due by:	**January 2027**		

The pastoral care of our children is central to the aims, ethos and teaching in our school and we are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children. It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent, carer and the child'. In school this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident.

St Sebastian's Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all our children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain and adults and staff must be sensitive to each child's individual needs.

Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

1. Assisting a child to change his/her clothes
2. Changing or washing a child who has soiled him / herself
3. Assisting with toileting issues
4. Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care
5. Providing first aid assistance
6. Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child
7. Feeding a child
8. Providing oral care to a child
9. Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided. *

*In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure. Parents have the responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

- Every child has a right to be safe
- Every child has the right to personal privacy
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- All children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities
- All children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views taken into account
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent

Assisting a Child to change his/her clothes

This is more common in our Foundation Stage. On occasions an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, he / she has an accident at the toilet, gets wet outside, or has vomit on his/her clothes etc.
Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required this will be given.

Staff will always give the child the opportunity to change in private, unless the child is in such distress that it is not possible to do so.

Changing a Child who has soiled him/herself

- If a child soils him/herself in school a professional judgement is usually made that it is appropriate to change the child in school, in some circumstances, school will request the parent/carer to collect the child for changing. In either circumstance the child's needs are paramount and he/she should be comforted and reassured throughout. The following guidelines outline our procedures but we will also seek to make age-appropriate responses.
- The child will be given the opportunity to change his / her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves if they are capable of doing so.
- School will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare uniform for this purpose.
- If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will offer to help do this.
- Where a child refuses help and is not able to change themselves, the emergency contact is informed and they are requested to come into school and change them, if they are unable to do so, then the emergency contact can request that school staff do this with the contacts permission. This is recorded on Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS).
- If none of the contacts can be reached the Executive Headteacher is to be consulted and the decision taken on the basis of loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the child.
- The member of Staff who has assisted a pupil with intimate care will inform parents by the end of the day.
- Where this is a persistent problem, or where a contact has been made with an emergency contact as a child has refused help, this is recorded on CPOMS.
- Individual Intimate Care Plans are developed in conjunction with parents where there is an ongoing issue.

Child Protection/Safeguarding Guidelines

Ensure that the action you are taking is necessary. Get verbal agreement to proceed –

CARE – CONCERN – COMMUNICATE.

Pastoral Care Procedures

- Ensure the child is happy with who is changing him / her.
- Be responsive to any distress shown.

Basic Hygiene Routines

- Always wear PPE, protective disposable gloves, ~~a mask~~ and apron.
- Seal any soiled clothing in a plastic bag for return to parents.

Providing Comfort or Support to a Child:

There are situations and circumstances where children seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Early Years). Where this happens, staff need to be aware that any physical contact must be kept to a minimum. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, staff must ensure that at no time can the act be considered intimate. If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff must provide care which is professionally appropriate to the age and context.

If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the child, is unacceptable. If a child touches a member of staff, as noted above, this should be discussed, in confidence with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded on CPOMS.

Assisting a Child who Requires a Specific Medical Procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Our Medicines in School Policy outlines arrangements for the management of the majority of medications in school.

Parental permission must be given before any medication is dispensed in school – this form is available from the school office.

A small number of children will have significant medical needs and in addition to the arrangements included in our Administration of Medications Policy will have an Individual 'Care Plan'. This Care Plan will be formulated by the relevant medical body. If required, school staff will receive appropriate training.

Swimming

Over the year our children from KS2 participate in a swimming programme. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes however, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people about health and safety considerations and to ensure unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

The changing room facilities at the swimming pool support effective and discrete supervision and privacy for our children when changing. Where a child needs additional support for changing, parental permission will be sought and a personal care plan will be drawn up so as to maintain dignity but increase independence.

Residential Trips

Residential educational visits are an important part of our school experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting.

As with Extra-Curricular Activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our Child Protection procedures, Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour Policies. Some specific Intimate Care issues may arise in a Residential context.

Showering

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes or taking a shower. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations.

This means that staff should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible and therefore Staff need to be vigilant about their own conduct, e.g. adults must not change in the same place as children or shower with children.

It is best practice in our school that when an incident has taken place that has necessitated a member of staff to be present when children are changing that an incident report is made.

Night Time Routines

It is established practice that the children's bedrooms are private spaces and anyone else wanting to enter the room should knock and announce their intention to enter.

At bedtime, children are given a set amount of time to change and prepare for bed and will be told when the supervising teachers will visit the rooms to check all is okay and switch off the lights. A reciprocal arrangement is in place in the mornings.

There are occasions when incidents take place during the night and the need arises to:

1. Assist a child to change his / her clothes
2. Change a child who has soiled him / herself
3. Provide comfort to an upset or distressed child
4. Assist a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Guidance as above will be followed with the support of an additional member of staff in attendance.

School Responsibilities

All members of staff working with children are required to have a DBS clearance. This includes any trainee teaching staff and volunteers who are in regular contact with children. Vetting also includes criminal record checks and a full Disqualification Declaration.

Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other Pastoral Care Policies of the school are involved in the intimate care of children.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the child. Parents/carers are required to give consent for their child to receive first aid treatment and further intimate care (should it be required) when their child enrols at the school. Only in emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents and school. Parents would then be contacted immediately.

The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.
If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, he or she must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

Guidelines for Good Practice

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

Members of staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care, as an opportunity to abuse children. It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff.

1. Involve the child in the intimate care. Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices. Check your practice by asking the child or parent about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care.
2. Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation. A member of staff helping a child on their own must inform another staff member where they are and what role they are carrying out.
3. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent. As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.
4. Be aware of your own limitations. Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.
5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image. Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Your attitude to a child's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.
6. If you have any concerns, you must report them. If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling report it immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the designated teacher. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the child's personal file.

Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have the choice for intimate care but the current ratio of female to male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a woman. The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- When intimate care is being carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy i.e. they should be appropriately covered, with the door closed
- If the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance;
- Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and make a written record;
- Parents must be informed about any concerns.

Communication with Children

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication. Depending on their maturity and levels of stress children may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc. To ensure effective communication:

- Make eye contact at the child's level;
- Use simple language and repeat if necessary;
- Wait for a response;
- Continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response; and
- Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

Appendix 1

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Intimate Care Plan

PARENTS/CARERS	
Name of child	
Type of intimate care needed	
How often care will be given	
What training staff will be given	
Where care will take place	
What resources and equipment will be used, and who will provide them	
How procedures will differ if taking place on a trip or outing	
Name of senior member of staff responsible for making sure care is carried out according to the intimate care plan	
Name of parent or carer	
Relationship to child	
Signature of parent or carer	
Date	

This plan will be reviewed twice a year.

Next review date:

To be reviewed by: